
SENATE BILL 6721

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senators Regala, Kohl-Welles, and Rasmussen

Read first time 01/22/08. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a task force on guardians ad litem
2 representing the best interests of a child in cases under Titles 13 and
3 26 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature shall convene and
6 support a task force to review and make recommendations regarding
7 guardians ad litem appointed to represent the best interests of a child
8 under Titles 13 and 26 RCW.

9 (2) The task force shall review and make recommendations
10 concerning:

11 (a) The implementation of the results of the review and study as
12 directed by RCW 2.56.150;

13 (b) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
14 standards regarding fees and costs for services performed by guardians
15 ad litem;

16 (c) The training curriculum currently developed by the office of
17 the administrator for the courts under RCW 2.56.030(15) and the
18 desirability of requiring specialized training for cases involving
19 special needs children;

1 (d) Applicable federal laws impacting Washington's guardians ad
2 litem statutes;

3 (e) RCW 13.34.100 and the exceptions to the appointment of
4 guardians ad litem for children in dependencies;

5 (f) Court oversight of the qualifications and performance of
6 guardians ad litem;

7 (g) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
8 standards regarding grievance and removal procedures and remedies;

9 (h) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
10 standards for guardians ad litem that are nonattorneys including
11 requiring legal training for volunteer guardians ad litem; and

12 (i) Other issues deemed relevant to improving the practice of
13 guardians ad litem in cases under Titles 13 and 26 RCW.

14 (3) The task force shall include the following members:

15 (a) The secretary of the department of social and health services
16 or the secretary's designee;

17 (b) The office of family and children's ombudsman or the
18 ombudsman's designee;

19 (c) Two representatives from the superior court judges association,
20 including a superior court judge and a court commissioner who are
21 familiar with cases under Titles 13 and 26 RCW;

22 (d) A representative from the Washington state bar association's
23 family law executive committee;

24 (e) The attorney general or the attorney general's designee;

25 (f) A representative from the Washington state court-appointed
26 special advocates;

27 (g) A representative from the administrative office of the courts;

28 (h) A representative of public defenders who represent children
29 under Title 13 or 26 RCW; and

30 (i) An attorney who represents parents from the office of public
31 defense's parents' representation program.

32 (4) The legislature shall appoint the following members of the task
33 force:

34 (a) A professor of law specializing in family law;

35 (b) A representative from a statewide domestic violence advocacy
36 group;

37 (c) A representative from a community sexual assault program;

1 (d) Two birth parents with at least one representing the interests
2 of low-income parents;

3 (e) A representative of a statewide foster parents association;

4 (f) A representative from a qualified legal aid provider that
5 receives funding from the office of civil legal aid;

6 (g) Two persons who act as guardians ad litem for compensation,
7 including at least one guardian ad litem who is a member of the
8 Washington state bar association;

9 (h) Two persons who act as guardians ad litem without compensation;

10 (i) Two representatives of the nonprofit corporations that are
11 eligible to receive state funds under RCW 43.330.135;

12 (j) One attorney who is a private attorney who represents parents
13 under Title 13 or 26 RCW;

14 (k) Two professionals who evaluate families for the purposes of
15 determining the custody or placement decisions of children; and

16 (l) One professional whose primary field of expertise is child
17 development.

18 (5) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each
19 of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

20 (6) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
21 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
22 representatives.

23 (7) The task force may form an executive committee, create
24 subcommittees, designate alternative representatives, and define other
25 procedures, as needed, for the operation of the task force.

26 (8) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
27 travel expenses under RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except
28 those representing an employee or organization, are entitled to be
29 reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and
30 43.03.060.

31 (9) The task force shall present its final report of findings and
32 conclusions, including recommendations for legislative action, if
33 necessary, to the governor's office and the appropriate committees of
34 the legislature by December 31, 2008.

35 (10) This section expires January 1, 2009.

--- END ---